

## Testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

Bill # **1017**: An Act Concerning Election Administration.

Bill # **6578**: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process

9 March 2021

Dear GAE Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Vice Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, and Members of the GAE Committee,

However you feel about the outcome of the election last year, there can be no disagreement that the historic voter turnout in Connecticut last year was a truly wonderful thing. We like to think that the United States is a democracy, but if that is truly to be the case, then it is essential that voting be made as easy as possible. Only those who question the wisdom of the electorate can oppose reforms that make voting easier.

Therefore, please continue to make voting easy, convenient and accessible for ALL CT voters by voting **YES** in **SUPPORT** of bill number **1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration** to make the absentee ballot drop boxes permanent and enable voters to request absentee ballots via an online application and in **SUPPORT** of bill number **6578: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process** for automatic voter registration at state agencies and to restore voting rights to parolees.

Last year my wife and I were able to obtain absentee ballots, in anticipation of being able to vote, if necessary, without having to vote in person. We are both over 70, and, therefore, we were genuinely fearful that if we became sick with Covid (a real risk) and the timing were bad, we might have been unable to vote at all on 3 November. Just having the absentee ballots ready to deposit into a nearby drop box was a huge relief. As it turns out, we were healthy on Election Day and chose, masked and socially distanced, to vote in person. But that was just good luck – I am retired and my wife's work schedule is flexible. Not everyone in Connecticut can say that.

There is something fundamentally cruel about the fact that Election Day is on a weekday (and in the middle of the week), when most people have to work, in a month when the weather is often bad – almost always cold and at times stormy as well. The idea that there are virtually no alternatives to waiting on line, in the cold, perhaps having to be late for work or rushing home from work early, is intolerable. Voting is a right and, therefore, should be exercisable freely and easily.

Claims that the proposed legislation would lead to voting fraud are specious. To all intents and purposes, there IS no voter fraud in this country (or this state). Moreover, even if there were, we should still be erring on the side of allowing more people to vote rather than making it more difficult to vote. Voting is fundamental.

Finally, it is worth noting that Connecticut is just one of seven states that has such antiquated voting laws. Five of the other six regressive states are former slave states; that is no accident. Do we really want to be lumped together with those states? I hope not.

Let's do the right thing. It is long overdue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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